

Vision Loss FACT SHEET

What is vision loss?

Vision loss means that a person's eyesight cannot be corrected to a "normal" level, making it hard or impossible to do daily tasks without eyeglasses, contact lenses, or other assistance. Vision loss can vary greatly among children and can be caused by many things.

What causes loss of vision?

Vision loss can be caused by damage to the eye itself, by the eye being shaped incorrectly, or even by a problem in the brain. Babies can be born unable to see, and vision loss can occur anytime during a person's life.

When should my child be checked?

Your child should be checked for vision problems by an eye doctor (an ophthalmologist), pediatrician, or other trained specialist at:

- newborn to 3 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- about 3 years
- about 5 years

Having your child's vision checked is especially important if someone in your family has had vision problems.

What are some of the signs of vision loss?

A child with vision loss might:

- close or cover one eye
- squint the eyes or frown
- complain that things are blurry or hard to see
- have trouble reading or doing other close-up work, or hold objects close to eyes in order to see
- blink more than usual or seem cranky when doing close-up work (such as looking at books)

One eye of a child with vision loss could look out or cross. One or both eyes could be watery, and one or both of the child's eyelids could also look red-rimmed, crusted, or swollen.

What can I do if I think my child may have vision loss?

You are doing the right thing now – talking with your child's doctor or nurse. If you or your doctor think there could be a problem, you can take your child to see a pediatric eye doctor (ophthalmologist) or other specialist, and you can contact your local early intervention agency (for children under 3) or public school (for children 3 and older). To find out who to speak to in your area, you can contact the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities by logging on to www.nichcy.org/states.htm or calling **1-800-695-0285**. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has information about vision loss (www.cdc.gov/ncbddd).

Treating vision problems early may protect your child's sight, and teaching children with severe vision loss how to function as early as possible can help them reach their full potential.

www.cdc.gov/actearly



Learn the Signs. Act Early.